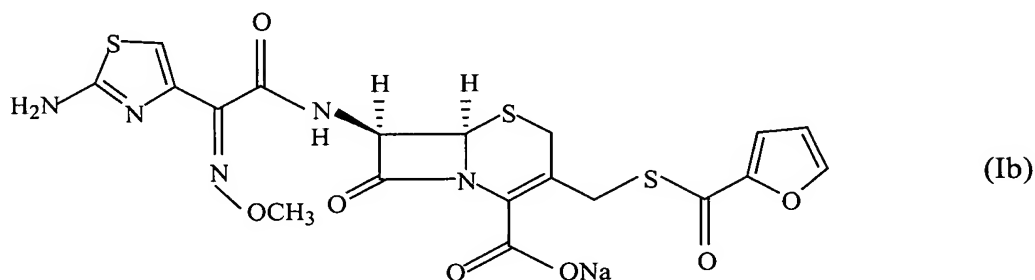
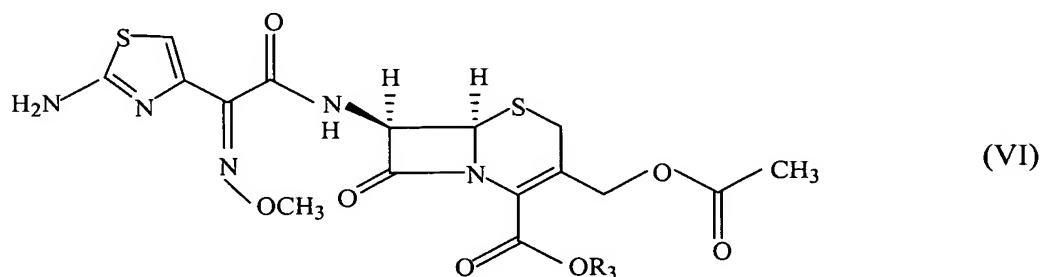


In the claims

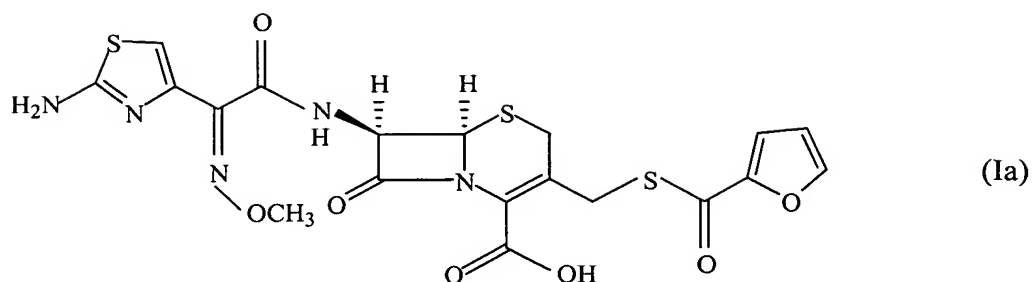
1. (Currently amended) A process for preparation of ceftiofur sodium of formula (Ib) ~~possessing high stability and~~ having purity of more than 97% and ~~substantially free of impurities~~, comprising



i) reacting cefotaxime or its salts or its esters of formula (VI)



wherein R_3 is hydrogen, an alkali or alkaline earth metal, or an easily hydrolysable ester, with thiofuroic acid, employed in a molar proportion of 1.5 to 3.0 moles per mole of compound (VI), in the presence of acetonitrile as solvent and in the presence of ~~large excess~~ of methanesulfonic acid, employed in molar proportions of 12 to 18 moles per mole of compound (VI), and at a temperature of between -5°C to 30°C to give after necessary neutralisation of the alkali or alkaline earth metal or removal of the ester group of the 4-carboxylic acid function, wherever applicable, ceftiofur of formula (Ia), ~~possessing high stability and~~ having purity of more than 97% and ~~substantially free of impurities~~;



- ii) converting the ceftiofur of formula (Ia) ~~thus obtained~~ to its salt with an organic amine by treating a solution of ceftiofur in a mixture of water and a water-miscible organic solvent with an organic amine, at a temperature ranging from -10°C to 10°C ;
 - iii) ~~reaction of~~ reacting the amine salt thus obtained with a sodium metal carrier in a mixture of water and water-miscible organic solvent and in presence of sodium hydrogen sulfite to give ceftiofur sodium of formula (Ib).
2. (Currently amended) The process A ~~process~~ according to claim 1, wherein the temperature of step i) is between 10°C to 30°C , ~~preferably between 15°C to 30°C .~~
3. (Currently amended) The process A ~~process~~ according to claim 1, wherein the water-miscible organic solvent is selected from the group consisting of acetone, tetrahydrofuran, acetonitrile, methanol and ethanol.
4. (Currently amended) The process A ~~process~~ according to claim 1, wherein the organic ~~amines are~~ amine is selected from the group consisting of triethyl amine, diethylamine, cyclohexylamine, tertiary butyl amine and benzyl amine.
5. (Currently amended) The process A ~~process~~ according to claim 4, wherein the organic ~~base~~ amine is employed in molar proportions of 1.0 to 3.0 moles per mole of ceftiofur (Ia). ~~preferably in molar proportions of 1.2 to 1.5 moles per mole of ceftiofur (Ia).~~
6. (Currently amended) The process A ~~process~~ according to claim 1, wherein the sodium metal carrier is selected from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide, sodium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium ethoxide, sodium acetate, sodium propionate, ~~sodium 2-ethyl hexanoate~~ sodium 2-ethyl hexanoate, and sodium [[of]] 2-ethylcaproate.

7. (New) The process according to claim 1 wherein the ceftiofur sodium is stable for 90 days at $40^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$.
8. (New). The process according to claim 1 wherein the hydrolysable ester is selected from the group consisting of lower alkanoylalkyl esters; lower alkoxycarbonyloxyalkyl esters; alkoxymethyl esters, lower alkylaminomethylesters, benzyl esters and cyanomethyl esters.
9. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the temperature of step i) is between 15°C to 30°C .
10. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein the organic amine is employed in molar proportions of 1.2 to 1.5 moles per mole of ceftiofur (Ia).